



# MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY OF SERVICE JAN 20, 2014

Corporation for  
**NATIONAL &  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICE** ★★ ★

## January 8<sup>th</sup> Phone Clinic Tips and FAQs

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## MLK Day

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- Brings people together through service to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., gets people excited and engaged in long-term service, and can bring more people into your service network.
- Engages communities in projects that create long-term, sustainable change on issues.
- Engages citizens in dialogue that raises awareness about local issues and projects that meet critical community needs.

## Final Preparation

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### Tips

1. **Visit project sites with volunteer team leaders prior to your event.** Double-check your space, and make sure you have the equipment and supplies you need. Order any missing items and review any incomplete advanced preparation tasks and divide them among your planning group or volunteer leaders.
2. **Check the number of volunteers needed against the number of volunteers registered.** Revise expectations accordingly. If needed, use flyers, emails, and social media to recruit more volunteers. Remind your volunteers a day or two before your event so that they are ready to go. Issues a mass email, mass text, or Facebook posting. You may need to modify your plans according to the number of volunteers that arrive.
3. **Touch base this week and next week.** Contact your partners, any VIPs you are expecting, and any media representatives you have invited, to remind them of your event, confirm their role, and tell them of any last-minute changes.
4. **Make sure to assign a welcome committee as well as a clean-up crew.** Your welcome committee should ensure your facility or meeting location is in good shape and make arrivals happy to be onsite. Have your cleanup crew ensure that you leave your venue in the best possible shape.
5. **Prepare volunteer sign-in sheets.** Include a photo release as part of the sign-in and ensure that those who do not grant permission for photos are distinguished in some way (name tag color; arm band, etc.). Sign-in sheets should also include contact information for sending appreciation items and updates on future service opportunities.
6. **Design a brief volunteer orientation.** Volunteer team leaders will use this to prepare volunteers for their assigned activity. Now would be a good time to make sure your orientation is outlined and ready to go. Make sure team leaders are trained beforehand on orientating and supervising volunteers.
7. **Recognize your partners.** If community partners have given you resources (cash, in-kind goods or services, or personnel), acknowledge them early on and invite them to your event. Honor them as much as you can during your program and thank them publicly. This will compel your supporters to give more in the future.

## Frequently Asked Final Preparation Questions

1. **There is not enough time with all of the other things going on with the holidays, staffing changes, and team leaders only gathering once a month for planning. Do you have new ideas?**

Delegation is important. Make phone calls and e-mails to different team members to see if they can handle different responsibilities. Email can be a huge time saver since you can reach multiple people at once and detail all of the remaining project needs when requesting assistance. If your planning team lacks capacity, reach out to dedicated, loyal, long-term volunteers who would be honored to help.

2. **How can we assess the scope of what our project can accomplish?**

The key to assessing the scope of what you can accomplish is ahead-of-time thinking and ahead-of-time planning. List the logistics of your projects and do some calculations what is needed and what can be achieved. It is also important to tap into the ideas of your planning committee and long-term volunteers who have worked on the ground.

3. **How can we overcome the challenge of partnering with other organizations, what are the best ways to communicate with them?**

Having face-to-face meetings are very important. Relationships drive partnerships and it is difficult to build much of a relationship via e-mail. Face-to-face communication early on is very important in building partnerships. Use phone calls to confirm or review details and make sure the right type of support will be provided. Sitting down and planning with your partners can reveal partners' areas of expertise and lessen your overall burden. Make sure your partners feel valued by appropriately acknowledging them in all materials (e.g. including their logos along with your on MLK Day related materials), and thanking them for their contributions.

4. **How can we ensure a great turnout and what are strategies for ensuring registered volunteers actually attend?**

Let your volunteers know you are counting on them. Reiterate the work to be accomplished and help them feel vested in your planned outcomes. Be very clear about expectations and responsibility. Build up encouragement for your event by informing volunteers of VIPs and possible news coverage. Let volunteers know how you are honoring them; food, t-shirts, etc. Reiterate that it going to be an exciting and fun opportunity to serve your community.

## Media and Promotions

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### Tips

1. **Distribute media advisories.** Send media advisories to local print and broadcast media 2-3 days before your event. Place an advisory on your website and share it with your partners. Make follow-up phone calls to ensure reporters received your advisory, are covering your event, and ask for suggestions for who else they think should be notified.
2. **Organize press material.** Create press folders that include fact sheets about your organization, details about the project and the MLK Day of Service and contact information, including the cell phone numbers of people onsite who are responsible for working with the media.

3. **Designate and prepare media contacts/spokespeople at every site.** Brief spokespeople on the information needed to respond to likely questions. You can access media advisory and press release templates, as well as a media planning timeline and other promotional resources at <http://mlkday.gov/promote/index.php>. Some media activities are things a good volunteer can help with. You may have someone on board that is good at media relations. Explore your expertise at hand.

## Frequently Asked Media and Promotion Questions

1. **How can we list our program on your event page, so we can publicize that we're sponsoring something?**

Go to [MLKDay.gov](http://MLKDay.gov) online and look halfway down the page on the right-hand side. You will find a link that says "register your project". The link will take you to site called "[all for good](#)," and you can register your project there.

2. **I am having trouble registering, can someone assist me?**

Yes, email us at [MLkday@cns.gov](mailto:MLkday@cns.gov) and we will help you.

3. **Where can we order posters and signs for free and find a downloadable MLK Day logo for flyers and other promotional materials?**

Visit [MLKDay.gov](http://MLKDay.gov). Click on the "PROMOTE" tab and you will find logos, media tools, materials, widgets and banners, and our PSAs and videos.

4. **How can we engage legislators' participation?**

- First, you have to ask. When contacting an official, make sure to indicate the ways your service project improves your community. Elected officials may want to be engaged with your organization, project, or cause if they understand how it will improve the communities they represent.
- You can also ask a local official to share a service announcement about your activity with constituents and the media. If your elected official cannot attend your project, ask them to issue a proclamation for MLK Day.
- You can access information about Senators and Congressional representatives at [Senate.gov](http://Senate.gov) or [House.gov](http://House.gov). You can access national and state-level elected officials at <http://www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml>. You can also check the elected official's website for their phone number, office location or email.

5. **What are the best ways to reach out to students?**

If you are interested in a particular age group, reach out to clubs and activities students participate in. Faith-based groups are also a good way to reach young people, as well as student councils and social clubs formed at the college, high school, and primary levels.

### For College Students:

- Make sure your promotional materials are widely distributed in areas frequented by students. It is important to highlight volunteering as a pathway to employment. Studies show volunteers are 27% more likely to find a job than non-volunteers.
- Get college students on your planning committee and ask them to visit neighboring campuses.
- Partner with groups that already work with college students and your target demographic (Model UN, Key Club, and NAACP).

- Connect with faculty – Suggest a Service-learning Component tied to coursework related to your project.
- Attend campus events (tabling at an activities fair can reach large numbers of students).
- Eliminate possible barriers: transportation, scheduling, cost.
- Work with Residence Life and meet with students in dorms to solicit their participation and even to train them for the volunteer activity.
- Work with campus community service director and service organizations or clubs on campus.

#### **For Younger Students:**

- Use MLK Day as a launching point for youth engagement.
- Foster Youth/Adult Partnerships: Encourage Mentoring. If you have an active mentoring program in your community, you may reach out to them and see if they would promote the King Day of Service with mentor-mentee pairs.
- Focus on historically disengaged youth populations.
- Challenge Adultism (when adults views are favored over young people).
- Create Opportunities for youth to be involved in planning and leadership.
- Bring youth to other neighborhoods to serve – acknowledge disparities.
- Involve organizations and communities in which youth already participate.

#### **6. How can we make our project more visible, what are methods for attracting journalist, and how can we attain good media coverage while ensuring it is clearly connected to MLK Day?**

The media will be looking for things to cover on MLK Day that relate to Dr. King. It is a federal holiday and often a slow news day. Your project can be the perfect opportunity for them. Notify your radio station or local television station in advance using a [press release](#) or [media advisory](#); then follow up with a phone call. Share information about your project and what your project is intended to accomplish for the community. Use the [public service announcements](#) available on [MLKDay.gov](#) to engage broadcast media; stations interested in running the PSAs may also be interested in covering your MLK Day events. Also review [Creating Newsworthy Projects](#) for tips on how to attract media to your project.

## **Time Management**

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### **Tips**

1. **Create detailed schedules** for: Pre-MLK Day (include what needs to happen and by when in order to have a successful MLK Day); a Day of schedule to ensure things stay on time and on task particularly if you have guest speakers, and a Post-MLK Day schedule for sending out thank-you's, acknowledgements, and reminders about future events.
2. **Share schedules**, as needed, with your site manager(s) and team leaders beforehand. A detailed schedule will help you coordinate: Transportation, Food & supplies, Volunteers, Vendors, Security, and Entertainment. Make sure you reconfirm any vendors and have that on your schedule. If you are dependent on having a building maintenance person somewhere at a certain time so you can pull off your project, you need to make sure you reconfirm that and have the right phone numbers. That should all be in your schedule.

3. **Get there early!** You need be organized beforehand in order for your project to run smoothly. Delegate team leaders to greet volunteers at the door and explain where to go next. Think about the one, two, three of the volunteer experience; what do they see when they get there, how should they conduct their task, and what is the ideal turnaround time. All those things should be in your schedule.

### Frequently Asked Time Management Questions

1. **How can we accomplish the greatest amount of good in the final two weeks of planning?**

Plan, plan, plan. The greatest amount of good will be accomplished by getting organized, thinking through every detail, being aware of every possible contingency, and being ready with a plan.

Ensure that you confirm or have a plan for managing the following:

- Conduct site visit to the service site; arrange for site set-up
- Confirm delivery of any supplies needed
- Train volunteer leaders, as needed (assign people to greet volunteers, direct them on where to sign in, provide them with instructions on the service activity, handout any incentive items)
- Ensure that all planning committee members and volunteer leaders know that goals that the service project is meant to accomplish and can speak about it to volunteers
- Have a plan for too many or too few volunteers
- Confirm any VIPs or speakers
- Create press kits and trained spokespeople, if you expect media
- Touch base with your partners and review roles for the day of the service event.
- Think over your volunteers' experience. You want your volunteers to feel you have carefully considered their motivation to contribute while ensuring their time will be well utilized.

If you do these things, you will likely accomplish the most you can.

## Contingency Planning

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### Tips

1. **Have a plan** for how you will utilize early arriving volunteers and how you will incorporate late arriving or unexpected volunteers who just show up. Make sure that volunteer activities are divided into smaller tasks so some number of tasks can be completed regardless of turnout.
2. **Be flexible.** If weather reduces or delays your volunteer turnout be prepared to adjust your timeline and the scope of your project. Based on the number of volunteers that arrive you may need to scale back your project. For example, instead of painting an entire wing of a school, you may want to paint a smaller portion of the wing instead.
3. **Safety first.** Safety is an important part of any service activity. Remember to prepare for emergencies; know the location of the nearest emergency facility. If you know that you may engage volunteers that have special needs, make sure you are prepared for that and that someone is ready to manage the volunteer experience for those volunteers. Have a first aid kit or several first aid kits and someone trained to use them at each of your sites.

## Frequently Asked Contingency Planning Questions

### 1. **What is the best way to deal with walk-in volunteers (non-registered)?**

The best way to deal with walk-in volunteers is to have a plan in advance for how to expand your project, if necessary. For example, there may be an extra room that can be painted if you have extra volunteers and supplies. Or in addition to helping students complete their FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), additional volunteers might assist students with researching scholarships, editing college admissions essays, or selecting colleges that meet the students' needs.

The worst-case scenario is that you have to turn people away. However, if you do, be sure to make them feel valued even if they didn't sign-up. A sample response might be "I'm sorry, we're completely full today and we just don't have enough supplies to accommodate extra volunteers. We'll have another volunteer opportunity next week. We'd like you to be the first in line for that project. Can we sign you up for that right now?" Finally, be sure to have enough photo and liability waivers if your project receives extra volunteers.

### 2. **I have organized MLK Day of Service events for the past 10 years and one of my biggest concerns has been with inclement weather. I have only had one event that was impacted by snow and the snow was nice enough to hold off until our program was over. I would like to know for future projects how do you determine large scale service projects during the winter month?**

There are two issues that arise from inclement weather. First is for those who are planning outdoor service projects, the project may not be possible to complete. Second, there is often significantly reduced volunteer capacity during inclement weather as volunteers may choose to stay home. In either case, you will need a contingency plan.

If you are planning large scale outdoor service projects during the winter months, it is important to have a back-up service project in place in the event it snows. Back-up service project ideas that can be executed in the event of snow include asking your volunteers to check on seniors in the community and help them to get food and supplies or clear their driveways, streets, sidewalks, or steps.

If you are planning large scale indoor projects and volunteers who are impacted by inclement weather and are unable to travel to your project site, then you should have a plan for how to ensure that both the project site and the volunteers who do show up feel that they are able to accomplish something. Often this means dividing tasks into small chunks that can be completed with fewer volunteers. As volunteers complete each task, they can move on to the next one—feeling accomplished along the way, while not starting something they are unable to complete.

It is also important that you have the phone numbers and/or email addresses of your volunteers in case your project is cancelled because of inclement weather. Volunteers should receive advance instructions of a website to check or phone number to call for information in advance of coming out in case of inclement weather.



## Reflection and Closing

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### Tips

1. **For kids**, visit <http://www.scholastic.com/mlkday/> and click on the classroom lessons. Through a collaboration between CNCS and Scholastic, there are lesson plans, service learning activities and reflection questions for grades 3-8.
2. **For adults**, see the article "[Renewing America Together: Celebrating MLK Day through Citizen Action Conversation and Service](#)." The [Classroom Conversations MLK Day toolkit](#) is another useful resource for reflection activities. It's also a great time to have those conversations about the needs in your community and using Dr. King's teachings to guide your reflection activity about how your community can address the needs together.

### Frequently Asked Reflection and Close-out Questions

1. **Besides the volunteer activity, should we plan something about Dr. King –a very short presentation or printed material?**  
Absolutely! We have [videos online](#) that are reflections of civil rights leaders which we encourage you to use. You might also create materials based on the reflection activities listed in the tips above.
2. **How can we get the volunteers to creatively connect, reflect and act on the MLK Legacy through community outreach?**  
One way to start might be showing the MLK legacy video available on MLKDay.gov. It's about seven minutes, and includes civil rights leaders talking about citizen action and taking Dr. King's life and teachings personally. The civil rights movement was such a powerful example of what can happen when people are committed to a cause, a principle, and focused on action. Just having a conversation is often inspiration enough for people to act.

Also, if any of your volunteers are old enough to actually have lived through the Civil Rights movement or ever heard Dr. King speak in person or in some way remembers these days, having that person share their experience could be very impactful. It is important to connect service on MLK Day with Dr. King's work. Encourage the use of the "Each one teach one" methodology to get your volunteers to share their experience with your project and discussion of Dr. King with others in their community.

You could also consider discussing reflections on Dr. King's legacy around a [Sunday supper](#), an event of the Points of Light Foundation. Encourage your volunteers to think about how they might plan their own version of the Sunday supper in their communities and have a conversation about community engagement.

## Additional Frequently Asked Questions

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1. **How do we get more people of color to participate in the MLK Day of Service?**  
Members of the community that you wish to see participate in MLK Day of Service need to be involved early on in the planning stages. It is important to invite people from various racial, socioeconomic, and faith backgrounds to your planning table and to value their perspectives. If you want to invite a group that traditionally does other activities on MLK Day such as hosting a prayer



breakfast, you might also explore how you can participate in their activities in addition to inviting them to participate in your activity. Additionally, those hosting other activities might need volunteers, so that may be another way to facilitate working together.

**2. How do we ensure the ongoing interaction across differing socioeconomic communities?**

The communities you want to be involved in the service need to be involved in planning your service project. Create a leadership and planning committee for your projects that reflects all of the people you want to participate. There are groups from various socioeconomic backgrounds in every community who are doing activities around MLK Day. If groups that you want to invite to your planning committee have been engaged in other activities for MLK Day, acknowledge the benefits that those activities have brought to the community when inviting the groups to join you. Also ask how your group could be of assistance to their plans. Seek ways to create coordinated activities that honor Dr. King's life and legacy throughout the community. This is a great way build trust and new relationships in your community. By working and planning together, you might be able to increase the impact each event has in the community.

**3. How do we get other neighbors involved?**

There are numerous ways to involve your neighbors in an MLK Day project. Here are a few suggestions:

- First and foremost, people have to know what you are planning. If you already have a project planned, use the MLK Day door hangers to let neighbors know what you have planned and provide a phone number or website where they can get more information.
- You can gather your neighbors to watch [MLK Day related videos](#). After watching the videos, you might host a discussion about how Dr. King's life and legacy are relevant to your community today and what types of community engagement might address these issues in your neighborhood.
- Great neighborhood-wide service projects include:
  - Host a community-wider "Energy Auditing" program. There are two great resources you can use to host this program. The [first resource](#) includes facts about energy efficiency. This [second resource](#) gives more detail on how to reduce your carbon footprint.
  - Organize an MLK Day project geared towards [preparing your neighbors for disasters](#).

**4. What other acceptable/allowable activities could I involve my volunteers in on Martin Luther King Day, if there are no MLK Day events going on in my community?**

There are numerous activity options that you can involve your volunteers in on Martin Luther King Day if none are currently planned in your community.

- If you have a group of volunteers, ask the group about the issues that are facing the community and then brainstorm volunteer activities that might help to improve those issues.
- Train the volunteers to host larger, community-wide dialogues about community issues and ways to improve those issues through service; then begin planning the service activities.
- Many of the toolkits on [MLKDay.gov](#) or [Serve.gov](#) include resource information that can be photocopied and distributed to educate communities about a variety of topics of importance to the community. Based on your community's needs, distribute information on:
  - [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance \(VITA\) and the Earned Income Tax Credit \(EITC\)](#)
  - [Conducting an Energy Audit in Your Home](#)
  - [Financial Aid for College \(FAFSA\)](#)
  - [Healthy Cooking on Budget](#)
  - [Disaster Preparedness](#)

**5. How can our project encourage students to stay in school despite their adversities?**

One of the ways your project can encourage students to stay in school despite their adversities is to first acknowledge those adversities. Have a framing exercise with students to compare adversities faced by young people during the Civil Rights era can help them understand similar trials and tribulations. This discussion can inspire them to view their education as a means for overcoming their adversities. Identify people who come from the students' neighborhoods (or similar neighborhoods) who have used education to overcome adversity and invite them to speak with students. This could be done as a talk or as a career fair with students learning about careers and the type of education needed for a specific career.

Also, there is an MLK Day toolkit found on [MLKDay.gov](http://MLKDay.gov) that covers the importance of [Bringing Learning to any Service You Do](#). This toolkit covers five (5) basic steps used in planning a project that can guide you as you work toward bringing learning into the service you do.

There are also MLK Day project ideas that highlight the importance of education including:

- [Organizing a Book and School Supply Drive toolkit](#)
- [Learning about Dr. King's Legacy of service toolkit](#)

**6. Are there MLK Day of Service Projects for San Francisco that I can support?**

You can access the [MLK Day project registry](#) to find projects using your city and state or zip code. There are multiple projects taking place in [San Francisco](#) that are still looking for volunteers; these include: [African American Art & Culture Complex's Community Clean-Up](#) and [Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco's Park Beautification](#). Please do a search to locate the complete list.

**7. There are schedule conflicts with logistics, other service activities, ect. Is it okay to do our activity on the 19th of January, or does it have to be exactly on the 20th?**

We really do consider the entire weekend, and we know that some projects will even happen after.

**8. Does our organization need a 501c3 to receive donations for a school supply drive?**

The requirements for donations are up to the organization making the donation. Some corporations or foundations may require that your organization have 501c3 status in order to be eligible to receive a donation. However, individual donors or other businesses may not have that requirement. In either case, it is important for you to disclose to potential donors the status of your organization so that they will know if you meet their criteria for giving.

**9. Who may we contact to put us in touch with funding mechanisms for our projects?**

If you are looking to fund this year's MLK Day project, you should reach out to local companies for in-kind donations due to the short turn-around time. If you are looking for future projects, you can view the MLK Day Planning Webinar on [Raising Resources and In-Kind Donations](#). The 2015 Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service grant opportunities will be posted to [MLKDay.gov](http://MLKDay.gov).

## Additional MLK Day Resources

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- Visit [MLKDay.gov](http://MLKDay.gov) to locate [webinars](#) and [toolkits](#) that include additional planning tips.
- Register your project at [MLKDay.gov](http://MLKDay.gov) or learn about other projects that are happening nationwide.
- Use [MLKDay.gov](http://MLKDay.gov) to access promotional materials such as posters, factsheets, bookmarks, stickers, and door hangers.
- Encourage your local radio station to play the [MLK Day radio PSAs](#) and share information about your service project with their audience.
- If you are working with schools, encourage them to participate in the [MLK Day poster contest](#).

## On MLK Day

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- Share your project and impact on [facebook.com/mlkday](https://facebook.com/mlkday)
- Tweet up-to-the-minute information on MLK Day projects and include [#MLKDay](#)
- Contact [MLKDay@CampaignConsultation.com](mailto:MLKDay@CampaignConsultation.com) with any questions